

"Everybody Needs to Grow – Spiritual Renewal"
2 Corinthians 4:16

"And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him (Jesus) and reflect his glory even more." 2 Corinthians 3:18

God has called us to be not only forgiven but transformed!

God's number one purpose in your life is not to make you happy, but to make you more like Jesus.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2

Principle: The primary goal of spiritual life is our transformation into God's character – that we become new creatures. God wants you to grow up!

How can we experience authentic change? We need to evaluate ourselves spiritually.

Principle: Spiritual growth is not automatic.

"If you are weary of some sleepy form of devotion; probably God is as weary of it as you are." Frank Laubach

"You have been Christians a long time now, and now you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things a beginner must learn about the Scriptures. You are like babies who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food." Hebrews 5:12

Principle: It is easy to be self-deceived.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9

Warning signs that show us if we are settling for a pseudo-transformation:

1. Am I spiritually inauthentic?
2. Am I becoming judgmental or exclusive or proud?
3. Am I becoming more approachable or less?
4. Am I growing weary of pursuing spiritual growth?
5. Am I measuring my spiritual life in superficial ways?

"Spirituality wrongly understood or pursued, is a major source of human misery and rebellion against God." Dallas Willard

Two wrong approaches to spiritual renewal:

1. Self-effort

Principle: Spirituality is not to try to be like Jesus, but to train to be like Jesus.

2. Focus on outward change

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day." 2 Corinthians 4:16

Covenant – "A coming together."

"For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." 2 Chronicles 16:9

Principle: God's perceptive ability moves throughout the earth looking for something specific – people He can strengthen.

Principle: The measurement of our heart is how committed we are to God.

Five tests of commitment:

1. Treasure test
2. Thought life test
3. Tongue test
4. Word of God test
5. Worship test

Principle: Spend as much time and effort and intention on your Inner Being as you do on your Outer Being.

How can I strengthen my inner being?

1. Look in the mirror of your soul.

Ask yourself:

1. Do I have any habits that need to be changed?
2. Have I been pretending to be someone that I'm not?
3. Is there anything in me – pride, anger, judgementalism, selfishness, stubbornness, fear – that I've been refusing to face?

2. Be intentional about what you eat – what you feed the real you.

Principle: There is a huge illusion in our days: I can just feed the Inner Me whatever I want to and still live according to the values that I hold to.

3. Look to the circumstances of your life to exercise your soul.

"Troubles produce patience and patience produces character and character produces hope." Romans 5:3, 4